

Middletown Open Space & Fields Committee

Minutes of Meeting

June 20, 2012

A meeting of the Open Space & Fields Committee took place on Wednesday, June 20, 2012 at 6 p.m. in the Community Room of the Middletown Police Station, 123 Valley Road, Middletown, Rhode Island. The meeting was called to order by Mason Hawes, Chairman.

Member Present: Anne Baptista, Austin Pendergast, Ed Sisk and Ralph Thomas

Members Absent: Cheryl Boergesson, Nicholas Coogan, Christian Lambiase and John Pinto

Ex-officio Members:

Present: Bruce Long, Town Council Liaison

Absent: Robert Johnson, Conservation Commission

Town Officials: None

Others Present: George Barcus, Regular Observer

Agenda

Roll Call: The roll was called with attendance as indicated above.

Old Business:

- Purgatory Chasm Walkway. Mason and Ralph briefed the committee**

on a meeting held at the Town Hall on May 17 concerning the issue of constructing an improved walkway from Purgatory Chasm to the Surfer's End Parking Area and removal of brush and undergrowth to open the unique vistas available from the area. The meeting was attended by Representative Dan Reilly, three representatives of the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM), Middletown town officials, and Ralph and Mason.

At the meeting, it became apparent that coordinating action on the request to improve the pathway and open the vistas would be difficult. There was uncertainty as to who owned the property (DEM, RI Department of Transportation (DOT) and Newport County Medical Health were possibilities) and because of the properties proximity to the shoreline, any action would need to be reviewed and approved by the Coastal Resources Management Council.

[Note: Representative Reilly later learned from DOT officials that DOT does not maintain Purgatory Road and has no property interest in the land concerned.]

- **Continue Review of Results of the Parks Projects Prioritization.** The committee was advised that repairs to the backstop of the baseball diamond at Berkeley-Peckham park would be accomplished in the near-term and that three barbeque grills and a bicycle rack had been ordered for Howland Park.

- **Park Procedures and Protocol Workshop.** The committee continued its review of the Survey to Assess Parks Conditions to be completed by the park steward, the Work Day Checklist and the User Questionnaire.
- **Community Garden on Library Grounds.** Ralph advised that each of the plots had been planted and that herbs and vegetables were being harvested.
- **Demery Park (Steward Assessment).** Addressed in New Business under the Steward Communication Protocol.
- **Identification of Parks Required Stewards.** No discussion.
- **Site Visit to West Main Recreation Complex and Community Garden.** Arrangements will be made for a fall site visit.
- **Standards for Parks: Benches, Signage, Bicycle Racks, Etc.** No discussion.
- **Properties Updates.** Addressed under the Continue Review of Results of the Parks Projects Prioritization agenda item.

New Business:

- **Steward Communication Protocol.** The committee addressed

communications in the following context: (1) Misconduct occurring in the park and vandalism are to be reported to the Police Department (vandalism was also to be reported to the Public Works Department (PWD); (2) issues involving the public's ability to safely use the park are to be reported to the PWD; (3) the period checklist report and fall detailed evaluation of park conditions are, as required by the Park Steward Program approved by the Town Council, to be submitted at the same time to the Open Space and Fields Committee and to the DPW. Citizens who wish to comment on park maintenance issues or to suggest improvements should be directed to the Citizens Request link on the Town website. Town officials will ensure the committee and park steward concerned are advised of submitted comments and suggestions.

- Planning for Tibbets/Boulevard Properties Sustainable Use. No discussion.**

- The Valley—Moving Forward. No discussion.**

- Site Visit to Other Middletown Parks. See the discussion under Old Business concerning a visit to the West Main Recreation Complex and Community Garden.**

- Proposed Agenda Items for August Meeting.**

- Purgatory Chasm Walkway/Scenic Vista Update**

- Continue Review of Results of the Parks Projects**

Prioritization

- **Park Procedures and Protocol Workshop**
- **Community Garden on Library Grounds**
- **Properties Updates**
- **Proposed Agenda Items for September Meeting**

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7 p.m. The next meeting will be at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, July 18, 2012, in the Community Room of the Middletown Police Station.

Ralph Thomas, Recording Secretary